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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE
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SUBJECT: SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY UNDER NEW SOCIALIST
GOVERNMENT

REF: 03 MADRID 4496

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Carol J. Urban,
reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Well before the March 14 general elections, Socialist Workers' Party of Spain (PSOE) leader Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero made clear that if elected he would refocus Spanish foreign policy away from the primacy of the transatlantic link and toward Spain's traditional EU partners such as France and Germany. On Iraq, Zapatero has long said that he would withdraw Spanish troops by June 30 if they were not under what he perceived to be an adequate UN mandate. He reiterated March 15, the day after he became President-elect, that Spanish troops would withdraw from Iraq before the June European Parliamentary elections if the international situation regarding Iraq had not changed. Since the March 11 attacks and the March 14 elections, Zapatero has said that his highest priority would be to continue the fight against terrorism. During the campaign, on March 4, Zapatero had announced that he would ask former EU Middle East envoy and veteran Spanish diplomat Miguel Angel Moratinos to serve as his foreign minister; Moratinos in recent speeches has echoed Zapatero's foreign policy approach, as has PSOE's foreign policy spokesman in parliament, Manuel Marin. (Zapatero has not confirmed Moratinos' appointment; Marin is another possible candidate for foreign minister. His views are exactly the same as those of Zapatero and Moratinos.) Although Spain under the Socialists will remain an ally of the U.S., Zapatero will distance Spain from the very close relations the U.S. enjoyed under the Aznar government. End summary.

"Spain in Europe and With Europe"

2. (C) Zapatero has stated on numerous occasions that if he were to become President, he would refocus Spain's foreign policy on its relations with Europe in the EU. After winning the March 14 election, Zapatero said one of his foreign policy priorities would be to regain the "confidence of European governments in Spain as a reliable partner" in EU integration. Moratinos echoed this in a March 10 speech, saying PSOE's "absolute priority" in foreign policy would be to recover the "weight and influence" it lost in the EU under Aznar.

3. (C) Within this priority, a primary goal will be to reach consensus on a new European constitution. Moratinos stated that Spain's objective should be to "integrate and construct" Europe, not separate it and block agreements (referring to Aznar's refusal to agree to an EU constitution that diluted Spain's voting weight). A Socialist government, said Moratinos, would work to reach agreement on an EU constitution by May 1, or at the latest by year's end. Spain should return from the "periphery" of the EU and instead form part of the "nucleus" of countries seeking to construct the EU.

U.S. Relations: "Respect and Friendship, Not Submission"

4. (C) Zapatero has pledged to conduct a transatlantic dialog based on "respect and friendship, not submission" (reftel). PSOE officials for some time have argued that President Aznar deferred inordinately to the United States. Moratinos repeated Zapatero's view March 10 and advocated a new strategic alliance with the U.S. aimed at ensuring "just globalization," and grounded in the "equal sovereignty" of both countries. Graphically, Moratinos said a Zapatero government would cut Spain out of the photo of the "Trio of the Azores" (referring to last year's meeting in the Azores of Bush, Aznar and Blair) and return Spain to the political axis of the EU.

Iraq: Spanish Troops Recalled Unless UN in Control

5. (C) Before the election Zapatero called the Iraq war

"illegal" and "immoral." He promised to bring Spanish troops home unless the UN was in control in Iraq by June 30 (he was unclear about what kind of UN control was necessary, but at a minimum he would want a UNSC resolution authorizing troop presence). He and PSOE party operatives have reiterated this pledge since winning the election; on March 15 Zapatero said Spanish troops would leave Iraq before the European Parliamentary elections in June if the "international situation" regarding troop presence does not change. And in his March 10 speech, Moratinos said Spain's participation in the Iraq war and the stationing of its troops there afterward exemplified the "rupture" of the Spanish model of foreign policy by consensus. He said Spain's troops would remain in Iraq only if the international community gives the UN the authority necessary to guide Iraq to a new government freely elected by Iraqis. More broadly, Moratinos said Spain's role in the Iraq war damaged Spain's relations with Arab countries, and a Socialist government would work to repair those relations.

16. (C) It is possible the new PSOE government will feel substantial pressure from the Spanish public to bring the troops home after June 30 regardless of whether there is a new UN mandate. Socialist successes in the March 14 elections were due in large part to the public's frustration with PP Iraq policy and fear that Spain's support for the coalition made it a target of terrorists.

Closer Relations with Latin America

17. (SBU) Moratinos has also said the Aznar government subordinated Spanish relations with Latin America to its relations with the U.S. Latin America, stated Moratinos, is Spain's natural foreign policy partner. Relations with Latin America should be conducted separately from relations with the U.S., to the extent possible.

A Look At Moratinos

18. (SBU) Moratinos, 52 years old, is a more than 30-year veteran of the diplomatic service. He is also a lawyer. Among other posts he has served in the former Yugoslavia and Morocco, and was Spain's Ambassador to Israel for approximately six months in 1996. In December 1996, the EU named Moratinos its Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process, a position he held until June 2003. Nearly all of his domestic assignments were connected to northern Africa or the Arab world. A fluent English speaker, Moratinos is married to the French Dominique Maunac. They have three children.

Comment

19. (C) Particularly in the wake of the March 11 attacks, Spaniards will expect Zapatero to distance Spain rapidly from the close relations Aznar cultivated with the Bush Administration. Zapatero owes his victory to the Spanish reaction to those attacks; many Spaniards blame the attacks on Aznar's pro-U.S. policy on Afghanistan and Iraq. Nonetheless, before the March 14 election, party insiders took pains to convince us that a Zapatero government would build and maintain strong, positive relations with the U.S., despite Zapatero's campaign rhetoric. We believe that a PSOE government would want to maintain positive ties with the US and remind us that US-Spain relations were excellent under 12 years of PSOE government in the late 1970,s-1980,s. But at least in the short term, Zapatero will feel pressure to back away from close cooperation with the U.S. on Iraq, and may also feel the need to demonstrate clearly to the Spanish electorate he will not kow-tow to the U.S., as he claims Aznar did.

ARGYROS